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Mount Diablo Bird Alliance

The Quail

Volume 69, Number 4

April 2024

Next Monthly Program Meeting: Thursday, April 4, 7 PM

Mount Diablo Bird Alliance will meet Thursday, April 4 in the Camellia Room at the Gardens at Heather Farm.

Address:

The Camellia Room @ The Gardens at Heather Farms
1540 Marchbanks Drive, Walnut Creek, CA 94598

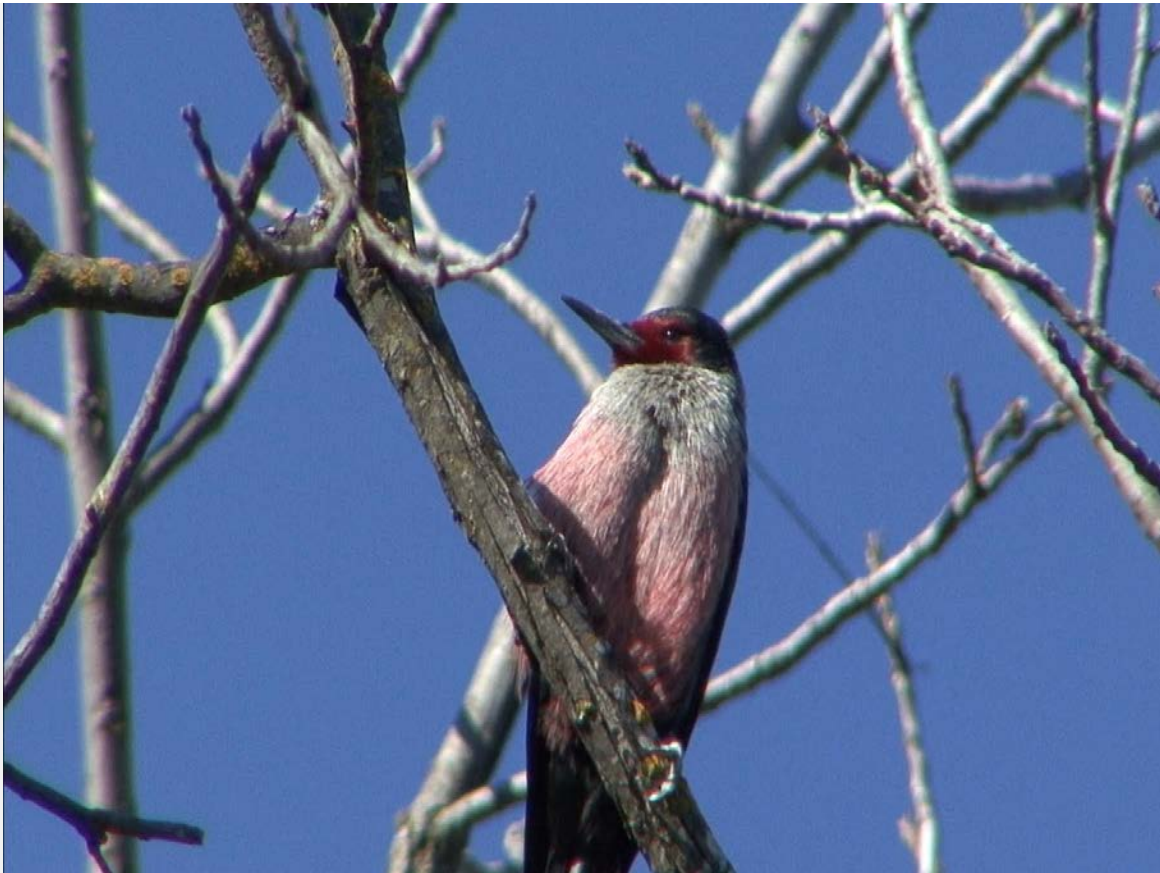
*As a conservation organization we encourage you to bring your own mug for coffee or tea.

Agenda:

6:30 PM Doors Open
7:00 PM Announcements
7:15 PM Refreshments and Raffle
7:30 PM Main Program: Bay Area Woodpeckers

April Main Program: Bay Area Woodpeckers

Jeffery R. Martin



Lewis's Woodpecker

Photo by Jeffery R. Martin

Woodpeckers have captured the human imagination for generations. The distant sounds of pecking, flashes of red plumage, and inevitable disappearance into the shadows of the forest evoke a sense of wonder about these extraordinary yet elusive creatures. Jeffery Martin's lecture and his close-up high-definition video segments explore the foraging strategies of our eight Bay Area woodpecker species. Insect excavation, acorn storage, the use of sap wells and other intriguing behaviors are our focus. Jeff's video segments illustrate unique evolutionary adaptations. We examine the anatomy of feet, tail, tongue and head which enable agile vertical climbing, adept grabbing of prey, and protection from concussion and dust inhalation. From the exquisite green and rose-colored Lewis's Woodpecker to the dazzling Northern Flicker, and more, we take a close-up look at the worlds of our eight North Bay Woodpeckers.

Videographer and naturalist, Jeffery Martin has filmed and produced "**Bahia Wildlife Habitat**" and "**Birds of Las Gallinas Marsh**" which can be viewed on the web sites of **Marin Audubon Society** and **Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District**. His films, "Woodpecker Haven" and "Birds of Lake Solano and Putah Creek" have been shown at the Lake Solano Visitors Center and Solano Parks Website. His "Bay Area Woodpeckers" and "Foraging Behavior in Large Wading Birds" lecture/video programs have been presented at several Bay Area Audubon Societies. In the past, Jeff has contributed to the slide library, visitor literature and campfire talks for Pt. Reyes National

Seashore. He has created an assortment of natural history walks, lectures and training for adults and children. In another vein, he has lectured to college faculty, students, and National Park Service Rangers on “visitor motivation” and the “psychology of nature” including on safari in East Africa. In his “day job” Jeff is a clinical psychologist and associate clinical professor at UCSF School of Medicine.



Red-shafted Northern Flicker

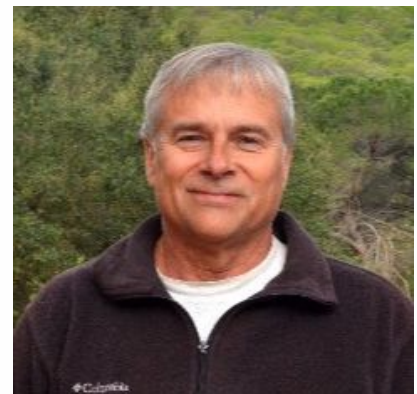
Photo by Jeffery R. Martin

President's Letter

Jerry Britten, *MDBA Presiden*

Birding Report

On March 1, my friend and lifetime Mount Diablo Bird Alliance member, Sri Char, phoned me to tell me he was looking at an emperor goose on Jersey Island in east Contra Costa County. This Alaskan/Siberian goose rarely ventures south into the contiguous U.S. Sri went out there expressly to look for such a bird after seeing reports of one farther north in the



Delta and thinking it could make its way south. His perseverance paid off! I dropped everything and went out to see it for myself – a beautiful bird with gray and black barring on the body and a gleaming white head and hind-neck. I got a photo from a few hundred yards away; it would have to do. Over the next couple of days, close to a hundred birders went out to see this goose (the first record for Contra Costa County) before it disappeared sometime on March 3.

Chapter News

Don't forget to enter our 4th Annual Photo Contest! Entry details are at the top of our website.

We've reconnected with our past by archiving a complete collection of our newsletter online, starting with Vol. 1, No. 1 from November 1954! We've also restored the East-Bay Bird Sightings archives dating back to 1998. Read about these developments later in this newsletter.

Spring festival time is upon us! Several organizers have asked us to table at events, and we're looking for volunteers to help out. See more about this in this newsletter.

We have exciting news about a new project we're starting – a songbird banding station in a natural area on the Cal-State East Bay – Concord campus, off Ygnacio Valley Road on the Concord side of the hill. Please read about this as well in this newsletter.

Finally, as a reminder, we're still looking for volunteers to help out with Education, Outreach, Publicity/Social Media Chair positions, and Hospitality at our meetings. If you can spare a little time and are interested, please contact **me**.

Stay safe, and get out there for the birds!



Emperor Goose, Jersey Island

Photo by J. Britten

Membership Updates

Rochelle Fortier, *MDBA Membership Chair*

Welcome New Members! I want to give a warm welcome to the new members who joined in February: **Jennifer Bean**, Walnut Creek; **MaryLou Correia**, Walnut Creek; **Lori Dieterle**, Walnut Creek; **Julia Jackson**, Walnut Creek; **Carole Leadem**, Concord; **Arvind Mallya**, Walnut Creek; **Nancy Robinson**, Ridgecrest; **Susan Schwab**, Walnut Creek; **Dave Turner**, Walnut Creek; and **Penny Walker**, Walnut Creek.



I hope to see you at our in-person meeting in April!

Call for Volunteers - Event Tabling

Jerry Britten

Mount Diablo Bird Alliance has been asked to table at the following events:

- **Ruth Bancroft Gardens Pollinator Days** in Walnut Creek on Saturday, April 6th, from 10 AM - 4 PM.
- **Lafayette Earth Day Festival** in Lafayette on Sunday, April 21st, from 11 AM - 2 PM.
- **Pleasant Hill Instructional Garden Earth Day** in Pleasant Hill on Sunday, April 28th, from 12:30 PM - 4:30 PM.

This is a great opportunity to represent MDBA to the public! Engage with visitors, talk about all things birds, and hopefully attract more members. If you'd like to help out for any length of time at any of these events, please contact info@mtdiablobirds.org.

Thank you!



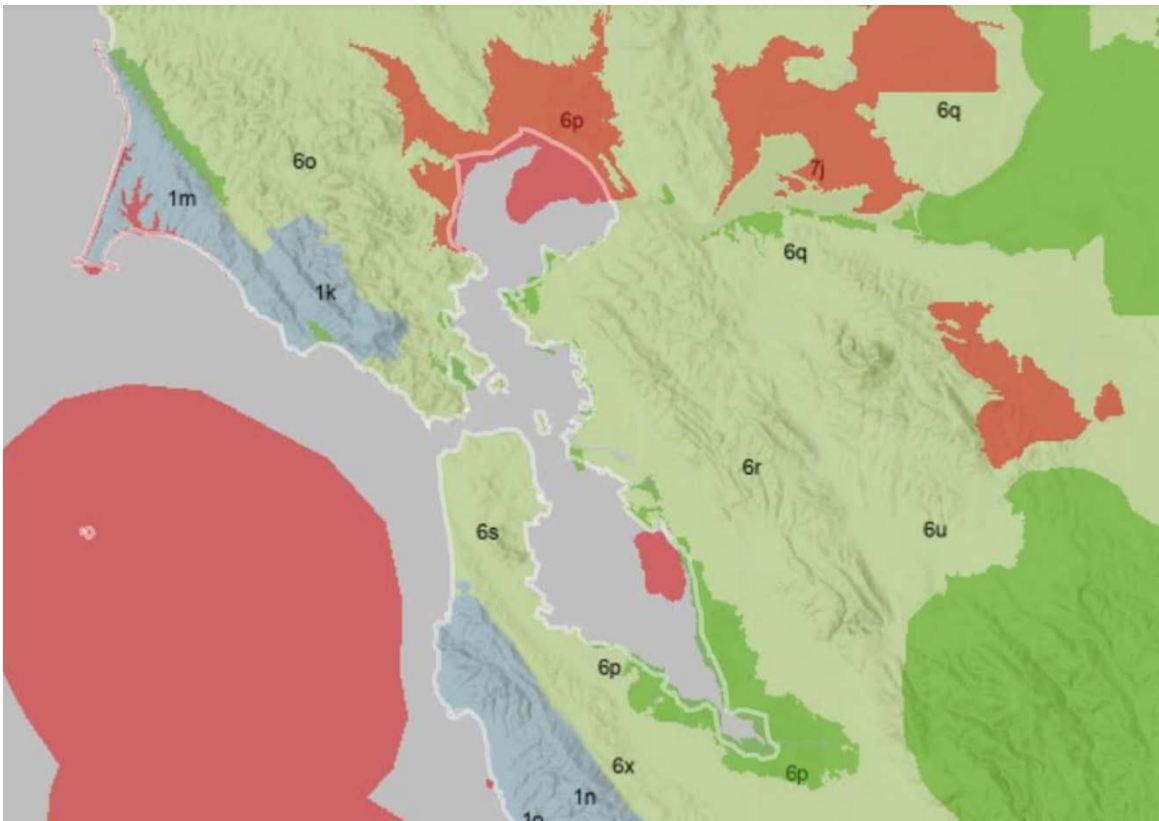
Lafayette Earth Day, 2023

Photo by J. Britten

Many Birds Will Need to Move as the Climate Changes

Only a Few Places are Climate Refuges

Juan Pablo Galvan, *MDBA Conservation*



1. Birds, Climate Change, and Important Bird Areas

Even birds may not have anywhere to go to escape a harsher climate. Many places will get hotter, drier, and less hospitable to the current groups of birds living there as the climate increasingly changes. And for some species, there may be nowhere to go. California contains special locations designated as official "Important Bird Areas" (IBAs). Only some of these IBAs will be able to support their bird communities as time goes on and the climate becomes less hospitable. That's why we all need to act now to stop, and lay the groundwork for eventually reversing, human-caused climate change. See if you live near these special IBAs and how they'll fare in a changed climate [HERE](#).

2. Plants, Climate Change, and Refugia

Unlike birds, plants can't fly. If they live in a place more vulnerable to climate change, their seeds will have to somehow find suitable habitat in a more tolerable climate. Research shows that only 15% of California will serve as "climate refugia," where conditions will be more stable for plants even under a changing climate. Most of that is in the northwest part of the state, but there are important areas elsewhere, even in the

Diablo Range. Just as plants depend on soil, light, and temperature, birds depend on vegetation. See where these vital refugia are [HERE](#).

3. Renewable Energy, Land Use, and the Climate Crisis

Renewable energy is vital to fight the climate crisis. But do we have enough land for it? Yes, but it'll take smart planning, forward-thinking, and a willingness to move fast at all levels of society to let sun and wind reach their full potential without doing too much damage to the planet we're trying to protect. Read more [HERE](#).

New Program: Songbird Banding Station at Galindo Creek Field Station

Jerry Britten

In the spring of 2022, I was contacted by Hallie Daly, now a graduate student in Biology at San Jose State University and a passionate bird bander with extensive field experience. She inquired about the possibility of establishing a **MAPS** (Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship) songbird banding station in our area. MAPS is a program under the auspices of the **Institute for Bird Populations**, establishing protocols and guidance for a network of over 1200 banding stations in North America. In the greater Bay Area, there are MAPS banding stations at **Coyote Creek Field Station** near Milpitas (run by the **San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory**) and at the **Palomarin Field Station** in Point Reyes (run by **Point Blue Conservation Science**). A banding program in our area, about midway between these two, would complement these stations and provide valuable data on bird population dynamics in the Mount Diablo eco-region.

With the help of Julie Woodruff, who runs our Northern Saw-whet Owl banding program, we scouted several sites over a few months. Then, in the fall of 2022, while looking for a Clay-colored Sparrow reported at the Boatwright Sports Complex, I had the good fortune to bump into Kathy Cutting, Coordinator of the Galindo Creek Field Station ([map here](#)). Located just south of the sports fields on the Cal-State East Bay – Concord campus, Kathy gave me a tour of the Field Station, which I hadn't even known existed. I was immediately struck by its suitability as a banding site – it's an almost half-mile riparian zone along Galindo Creek, very birdy, near other protected lands (such as Lime Ridge Open Space, Save Mount Diablo's Mangini Ranch property, and the State Park), and with good access to boot. Hallie concurred with this assessment, and thus began the long process of obtaining permits, permissions, etc.

Fast-forward to the present: we now have a federal banding permit, permission from the landowner (Cal-State East Bay), and the MDBA Board has agreed to fund the program! The last domino to fall is the State of California permit, which is 'in the mail'. It's a long shot to expect that we can begin banding during the spring migration and nesting season, but it's possible. If we have to wait till fall, we will. We expect this to be a long-term program and are seeking volunteers. If you're interested in getting involved, please contact [me](#). No experience is necessary, although it's welcomed!

A Complete Set of *The Quail* is available online!

Jerry Britten, *MDBA President*

Thanks to Lori Patel, who kept paper copies of *The Quail* in her garage all these years until reaching out to us, and to Rochelle Fortier, who had these scanned, we now have a complete set of PDF files online of all volumes of the newsletter, from V1, no.1, November 1954, to the present day! Previous to this, we had copies back to 1971. They can all be found [HERE](#).

To celebrate, in lieu of our usual From 50 years ago segment, we present the following:

From 69 Years Ago – The Founding of the Mount Diablo Audubon Society

(Contained in the Volume 1, No 4 issue of *The Quail*, February 1955)

HISTORY OF THE MT. DIABLO AUDUBON SOCIETY

In April 1953 a small group interested in the formation of a local Audubon Society met in the Community Room of the Coast Counties Gas Company, under the auspices of the Walnut Creek Recreation Council at that time headed by Wm. E. "Bill" Hassler.

Mr. Hassler acted as secretary for the evening. Chief speaker was the late Vaughn MacCaughy, a West Coast representative of the National Audubon Society. Other National representatives present were Alexander Sprunt, III, of the San Francisco office and the California northern summer camp, and Ferdinand Ruth, member of the East Contra Costa Junior College faculty and also of the summer camp staff.

First advice, given after the meeting adjourned was to postpone definite organization until the re-opening of schools in the fall. However those in attendance who had long hoped to have a local group of "bird watchers" felt immediate action preferable, lest the continuity of thought be broken and interest hard to re-awaken after a lapse of several months.

Accordingly, a second meeting was called that month. This, held at the Hasslers' was well attended, word having gotten around.

Mrs. J. C. McGeehon emerged as temporary chairman. Mrs. Elizabeth C. O'Meara undertook to serve temporarily as publicity chairman. Plans were made for the initial field trip on May third to Tilden Park.

During the nooning the chairman named a By-Law committee consisting of Albert O. Cooperrider, Mrs. Cecil Smith and Mrs. Hassler. The second Thursday of the month at 8:00 p.m. was chosen as the meeting date and time.

Thus the first regular meeting was held May 14th. The By-laws were considered with definite action put over to the June meeting when the nominating committee reported. Nominating committee was Mrs. George Hoffschneider, Mrs. Mary Whitcomb, and Paul Opler.

At this meeting plans were made for the second field trip when the invitation to spend the day at Mulfontes in the Livermore hills was accepted.

In June with the By-Laws adopted and a regular corps of officers elected the Mount Diablo Audubon Society was on its way with Mr. Cooperrider its first president.

W.B. Historian's note - This is the truth, nothing but the truth, but not the whole truth. That will appear anon - Isabella McGeehon.

Bay Birding Challenge

Have you ever done a "Big Day?" or wanted to?



Birders on a "big day" visit several varied habitats, striving to record as many species as possible from dawn until dusk. As part of their annual Bird-a-thon event, the Golden Gate Birding Alliance—our neighbor chapter of the NAS—organizes a friendly competition between teams of birders to see who can record the most species.

Would you like to join or support a team from Mount Diablo Bird Alliance? The Challenge will be held on Saturday, April 27th. You don't need to be an expert birder—just bring your enthusiasm for a full day in the field! It's a friendly, fun event and a fundraiser for both of our chapters. (Donations in support of a Mount Diablo team will be split between MDBA and GGBA, and individual participants will not be required to solicit donations.)

If you'd like to know more please contact our Field Trips Coordinator, **Matt Tarlach**, who's getting the ball rolling.

Easy-Bay Birding Archives are Back Online

Jerry Britten, *MDBA President*

Mount Diablo Bird Alliance maintains a listing service, East Bay Birding - Sightings ([website](#)). This service allows people to report interesting and rare bird sightings in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties via email. These emails are archived back to 2010 and are searchable on the website.

Prior to 2010, we used another list service, and archives from 1998 to 2010 were made available on a website hosted by longtime member Dal Leite. Last year, Dal took down his website, temporarily causing these archives to be lost. We have recently procured a new site, EBB-Archives.org, to provide a searchable archive for these sightings. It is now live.

To sign up to receive sightings emails from this service and to post your own sightings:

- Go to groups.io/g/EBB-Sightings and click on "Sign Up" (upper right).
- Archived emails going back to 2010 can be accessed by clicking "Messages" on the upper left.
- Guidelines for posting are also contained on the page.

To search sightings from 1998-2010:

- Go to EBB-Archives.org

Both sites can also be accessed from our [MDBA website](#).

Western Bluebird Boxes

Stanton Anderson, Eagle Scout, BSA



My name is Stanton Anderson. I'm a Boy Scout in the BSA and recently earned the Eagle rank, the highest rank in scouting. To attain the rank of Eagle, a Scout needs to plan and lead a project that benefits the community. In my search for a meaningful project, I found many viable options. However, when I learned about someone volunteering for the California Bluebird Recovery Program (CBRP), I wanted to know more. I connected with Georgette Howington, State Assistant Program Director for the CBRP. Georgette donates a lot of her time to the program and eventually became my mentor.

The Western Bluebird is loved for its striking beauty, symbolic value, and diet, which keeps the local insect population in check. Unfortunately, the Western Bluebird population has been declining rapidly since the 1970s due to various threats, most notably habitat loss and pesticides. Western Bluebirds are secondary cavity nesters, meaning they can't build their own homes and rely on abandoned cavities created by woodpeckers and other birds. This is where the CBRP comes in. The nest box program started in 1994 to combat declining populations. Bluebird boxes were set up and monitored to collect data for research. This increased habitat availability has successfully helped restore bluebird populations. The program is seeing amazing results, with an average of 16,000 fledglings counted annually since 1996. I decided that contributing to this effort would be the perfect Eagle Scout Project for me.

Collaborating with Georgette, we got started designing the bluebird boxes I would build. I obtained approximate box dimensions and details for features including an expansive roof for shade, a side door for cleaning and data collection, ladder steps inside for fledglings, and lighter paint to manage temperature. Vents beneath the roof ensure ventilation, while carefully positioned gaps at the bottom facilitate drainage. I purchased enough wood for 13 boxes. After crafting a prototype, I created a detailed cut sheet for replication and mass production. Then the building process began. After Georgette examined the prototype and provided minor adjustments, my dad, my Scoutmaster, and his son assisted in cutting and organizing every necessary wood piece. With a group of about 20 people, we assembled and painted the boxes. Two friends and I crafted wire mesh caging to attach to the entrances. After more than 125 hours of work, Georgette collected the boxes, and they found homes in a vineyard and a walnut orchard in Lake County.

It's estimated that these boxes will last twenty to twenty-five years and house 1,000-1,500 bluebirds. Monitors check them weekly throughout the season to collect data, helping to grow the local bluebird population and provide valuable information for future research. As this project was the final requirement before Eagle, I passed my Board of Review and officially achieved the rank of Eagle on September 26, 2023.

I'm grateful for the many people who helped me with this project and especially glad I crossed paths with Georgette, who mentored me throughout the process. Throughout

this project, I received help from twelve Scouts, eight adult leaders and parents, and three school friends. Directing this project gave me leadership experience and was a great learning opportunity. I am grateful for the BSA, which develops leadership, skills, ethics, and more. Scouting has given me opportunities to serve like this and has exposed me to the outdoors. I'm honored to be an Eagle Scout and happy I made a contribution to the preservation of the Western Bluebird.

MDAS Trip Report

Contra Loma

Mona Lange



Killdeer

American Bittern

Photos by Pam Lorenz



American Bittern

Osprey

Photos by Isaac Aronow



American White Pelican

Photo by Issac Aronow



Double-crested Cormorants

Photo by Mona Lange



Osprey

Photo by Pam Lorenz

On March 6, eleven members and guests of the MDBA went birding at Contra Loma Reservoir in Antioch.

Despite a cloudy start, the weather turned fantastic, and we recorded 51 bird species along with a sighting of a cute cottontail rabbit. Among the many highlights was a long, clear view of an American Bittern – we even saw it catch a fish! Two Ospreys circled overhead, each carrying a fish as if showing it off. We witnessed a truck delivering trout into the lake, followed

by White Pelicans and Double-crested Cormorants feasting on the newly released fish. It was a very interesting process to observe.

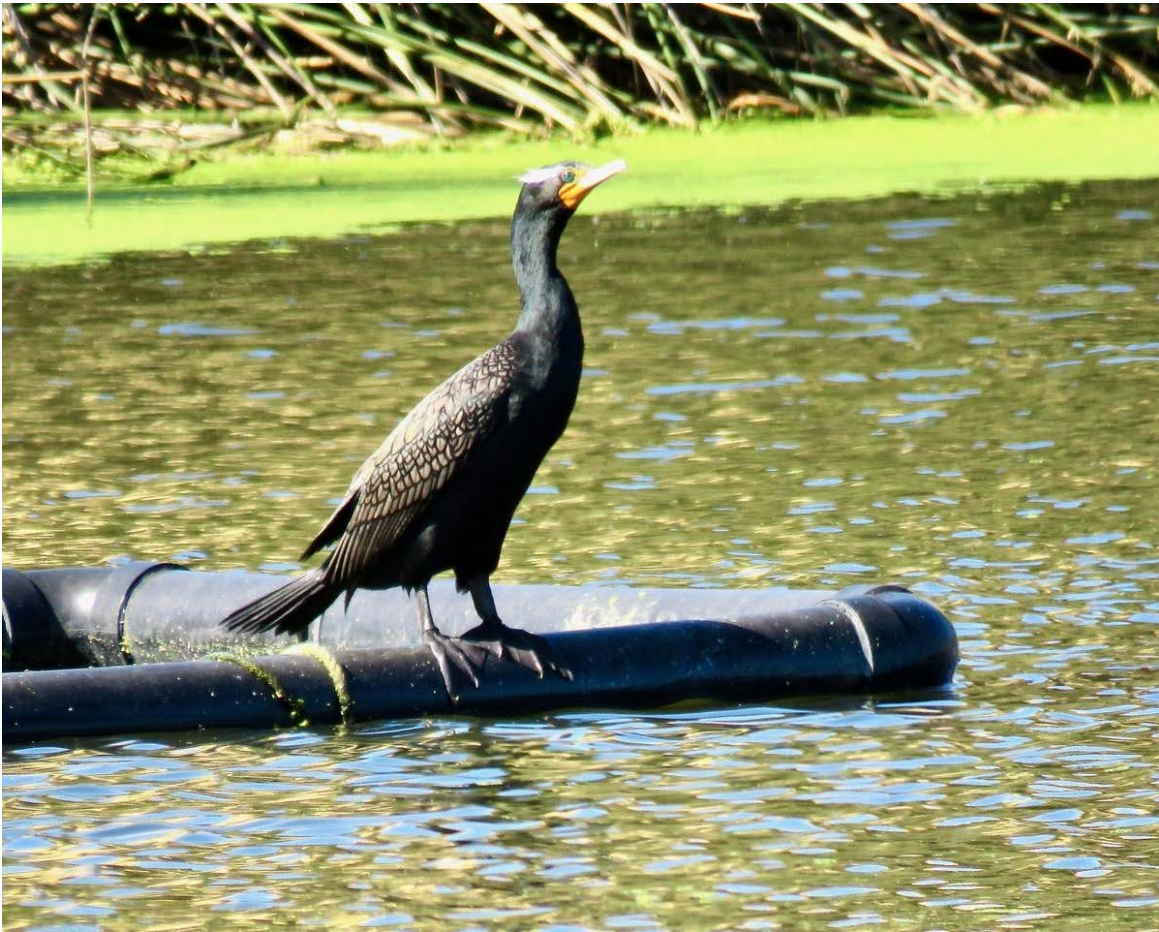
We were lucky to find the rare Red-necked Grebe that's been wintering at Contra Loma. It stayed close to a Western Grebe. We also spotted a pair of Red-shouldered Hawks seemingly sharing nest-building duties. Many other great sightings included a Great-tailed Grackle, Green Heron, and a Hermit Thrush.

McNabney Marsh

Matt Tarlach and Sandy Ritchie



Great-tailed Grackle



Double-crested Cormorant



Black-crowned Night Herons

On March 11, a dozen MDBA birders met at McNabney Marsh in Martinez to see what birds were visiting. From the viewing platform at the end of Arthur Road, we spotted a variety of ducks, including Canvasbacks and Buffleheads. Some of the American Avocets were already

sporting their beautiful rusty-pink breeding plumage. A lone Glaucous-winged Gull stood out on an island amongst its Western, California, and Ring-billed cousins.

Crossing under I-680, we entered the Mt. View Sanitary District. This water treatment plant was one of the first in the US to design its settling and filtering ponds as wildlife habitat back in the 1970s. The facility was further improved in the early 2000s, and they've done a fantastic job. On this visit, we were pleased to see a number of Great-tailed Grackles along with Green Herons and a Belted Kingfisher. The distinctive calls of Marsh Wrens and Common Yellowthroats echoed frequently, though they remained hidden from sight. A more extroverted Double-crested Cormorant showed off its breeding head-tufts, a spectacle we only get to see for a few weeks each year. The air above the ponds buzzed with Tree Swallows making use of the several nesting boxes. Higher up, we spotted three Red-tailed Hawks – one of them being harassed by a much smaller American Kestrel. The highlight for many was the sight of about 30 Black-crowned Night Herons, mostly juveniles with a few striking adults mixed in.

A special thank you to Randy Huey for keeping the checklists and to Isaac Aronow for the photos!

Ebird trip **report**.

MDAS Field Trips

Matt Tarlach, *MDBA Field Trip Chair*



MDAS mounts dozens of Field Trips throughout the year, ranging from easy, accessible strolls around our local parks to longer outings, including some vigorous hikes. On each field trip, one or more leaders guides our group to the best hotspots, in the best season... but the bird-spotting is really a team effort. *Come birding with us!*

You can see the field trip checklists we've recorded since transitioning to electronic records [here](#).

To ensure that trips are not overcrowded, pre-registration through Eventbrite is required. MDAS members have priority with member sign ups opening as soon as the trip is announced in our newsletter. Non-members are welcome on our trips too! Registration opens to the public a week before the trip.

All registration closes *2 days before the trip*, so leaders can know how many to expect. If you won't be able to attend a trip that you've signed up for, please cancel via Eventbrite *as early as possible* to open that spot up for someone else!

Out of respect for our members and community, we continue to ask participants to take sensible precautions for everyone's health. MDAS events do not require carpooling, though participants are of course free to make their own arrangements.

Field trips are ranked according to difficulty:

Trail Rating 1: Easy. Little walking, under 1 mile, on smooth paths.

Trail Rating 2: Moderate. 1 mile or more, possibly some rough terrain.

Trail Rating 3: Challenging. Extensive walking and climbing on rough terrain!

We always need new trip leaders! Please contact our field trip coordinator, **Matt Tarlach**. If you'd like some guidance in leading trips, he might be able to pair you up with an experienced leader who can show you the ropes.

A Poorwill Quest, Redux!

Wednesday, April 3, 7:15 PM - 9:15 PM



Common Poorwill

Photo by Jerry Britten

Repeating a successful expedition, we'll hike up a fire road on the east face of North Peak in Mount Diablo State Park, to see Common Poorwills as they forage for moths along the fire roads through the chaparral. They will be detected by their eyeshine from our lights.

This is a nocturnal hike. It is Trail Category 3 because, although only 2 miles round-trip, the road is quite steep and there is a stream crossing near the trailhead with the possibility of getting wet feet. Bring layers, wellington-type boots that can be stashed in the bushes after the stream crossing and exchanged for normal hiking boots, and a flashlight/headlamp. Expect to be in the field for ~1.5 hrs.

Trail Rating: 3 --- Strenuous. Read trip details!

Elevation change: Substantial, steep in places, and we will be descending after dark

Leader: Jerry Britten

Meet: GPS 37°53'58.7"N 121°52'24.5"W

Directions: From Clayton drive east on Marsh Creek Road. Turn right on Morgan

Territory Road and go about out 1500', to a turnout on the right.

This field trip is limited to 5 Participants max, due to limited parking and the need for quiet.

Sign up [HERE](#).

Black Diamond Mines

Thursday, April 11, 8AM - 1PM



This trip includes a vigorous climb up a steep trail with an elevation gain of several hundred feet. Why? Because this location offers the best chance in our MDBA territory to see and hear Canyon Wrens! The trail is rocky, and footing can be tricky, so be prepared.

There's no guarantee we'll find the wrens – but we're sure to see many other birds. California Thrashers, Rufous-crowned Sparrows, and Phainopeplas are often spotted here, though again, nothing is certain. At the very least, we'll share an adventure in a beautiful and historically interesting location. Bring plenty of water and a lunch.

Trail Rating: Category 3, difficult uphill trail, potentially hot

Elevation change: 600 feet

Leader: Matt Tarlach, MDBAFieldtrips@gmail.com

Meet: Black Diamond Mines parking lot at top of Somersville Road

Directions: Exit Hwy 4 at Somersville Road in Antioch. Drive south, enter the park gate and drive about 1 mile uphill to the last parking lot at road's end.

This field trip is limited to 12 participants.

Register [HERE](#).

Mitchell Canyon

Thursday, April 18, 8AM - 1PM



Wilson's Warbler

Photo by J. Britten

We will walk into Mitchell Canyon on the lower slopes of Mount Diablo State Park. Many spring birds are possible here, warblers, hummingbirds, flycatchers, gnatcatchers and more. Spring flowers may still be blooming. This is a good trip for beginners.

Trail Rating: Category 3. 3+ miles on a potentially hot, dusty trail

Elevation change: up to 400 feet

Leader: Sandy Ritchie, (925) 381-2514

Meet: Mitchell Canyon parking lot, Clayton

Directions: From Ygnacio Valley Road in Concord, turn south on Clayton Road. Turn right onto Mitchell Canyon Road and drive past quarry to end. A \$6 parking fee is required---bring exact bills.

This field trip is limited to 15 participants. Participants must acknowledge the MDBA Liability Waiver (available during registration).

Register [HERE](#).

Pine Canyon

Saturday, April 20, 8AM - 1PM



Townsend's Warbler

Photo by J. Britten

This field trip is especially good for beginning birders! Pine Canyon, which includes the Castle Rock EBRPD recreational area, and the Diablo Foothills Regional Park just beyond, provides rich habitat and resources for spring migrants passing through, as well as for many returning and nesting summer residents.

We should expect to find nesting pairs of Bullock's Orioles and House Wrens. Warbling Vireos, along with their cousins, the Cassin's Vireo, nest within the canyon. Rufous-crowned Sparrows are to be found, and if we're lucky, Lazuli Bunting. We'll look (and listen) for Black-headed Grosbeaks and Western Tanagers. Western Wood-Pewees and Pacific-slope Flycatchers pass through. We might get lucky with an Olive-sided Flycatcher. And the warblers: breeding plumage Yellow-rumped, Black-throated Gray, Wilson's, Yellow, Nashville, MacGillivray's, Hermit, Orange-crowned, and Townsend's.

Bring water and snacks. This should be a wonderful springtime field trip.

Trail Rating: Category 2–Moderate with creek crossings

Elevation change: 150-200 feet

Leader: Tracy Farrington, 925-788-6223

Meet: Diablo Foothills Regional Park trailhead parking lot

Directions: From Ygnacio Valley Road, drive south on either Walnut Avenue or Oak Grove Road to the traffic circle. Continue south on Castle Rock Road, pass Northgate High School, then drive to the end of the road.

This field trip is limited to 15 participants. Participants must acknowledge the MDBA

Liability Waiver (available during registration).

Register [HERE](#)

Del Puerto Canyon

Monday, April 22, 9AM



Western Kingbird

Photo by Isaac Aronow

As we drive through Del Puerto Canyon, on the east side of the Diablo Range, we'll be looking for Canyon Wren, Costa's Hummingbird, Greater Roadrunner, and other goodies. It can get very warm! Bring lunch and plenty of liquids as this trip takes us further from conveniences than most of our outings.

Trail Rating: 1 - This is mostly a car trip, with several easy walks.

Leader: Steve Buffi (925) 200-4555

Meet: Carpool leaves from Sycamore Valley Road Park and Ride at 7:30 AM or on Del Puerto Canyon Road, just west of I-5 at 9 AM.

Directions: Take I-580 east to I-5 south to the Patterson exit (56 miles from Sycamore Valley Road). Turn right at the exit and onto Del Puerto Canyon Road. Before the main caravan gets to Del Puerto Canyon Road we will pull off I-5 at the Larry Combs Rest Area, near Westley.

Note: there are no facilities between this location and our lunch stop.

Due to the extremely limited parking at several stops along our route this trip is limited

to 12 participants.

Register [HERE](#).

Putah Creek @ Pedrick Road

Wednesday, April 24, 7:30 AM - 2PM



This delightful, fairly short stretch of Putah Creek (~3/4 mile) can be very productive during spring migration. It's a fairly easy walk through lovely riparian habitat right down in the creek bed. The occasional sandy stretches along the creek often host several species of birds bathing in the shallows.

Expect to find a nice selection of warblers: Yellow, Black-throated Gray, Orange-crowned, Wilson's, MacGillivray's, Hermit, Townsend's, and perhaps a Nashville. Of course, you might also see Pacific-slope Flycatchers, Western Wood-Pewees, Western Tanagers, and keep an eye overhead for Swainson's Hawks. Vagrants pop up from time to time (a Tennessee Warbler was found a couple of years ago), so don't discount the prospect of a nice surprise!

Bring water and snacks. Facilities are limited to a porta potty at the parking lot.

Trail Rating: Category 1, an easy walk.

Leader: Tracy Farrington. 925-788-6223

Meet: Putah Creek parking lot (description to follow)

Directions: Take 680 east, cross the Benicia bridge, remain to the right, and continue on 680 for ~14 miles to Cordelia where you will merge on to 80 east. Take 80 east about 27 miles to Pedrick Road. This will come up about a mile and a half past 113 south towards Dixon. Turn north (left) at Pedrick, drive about two miles, and just as you cross

over Putah Creek, turn left on to a short dirt road and into the Putah Creek parking lot, where we'll meet.

This trip is limited to 15 Participants. All must acknowledge the MDBA liability waiver (available at registration).

Register [HERE](#).

Lagoon Valley & Pena Adobe - NEW TRIP!

Tuesday, May 7, 9AM - 1:30 PM



Brown Creeper

Photo by Mona Lange

We'll first bird at Pena Adobe Park, located off I-80 just west of Vacaville. Pena Adobe is a historic park with well-established trees, including an orange tree planted as early as the 1860s. Birds we've seen here include Brown Creeper, Hermit Thrush, and Black-headed Grosbeak.

After exploring Pena Adobe, we'll drive to Lagoon Valley Park. There is a \$5 parking fee here. Note that the kiosk only takes either exact cash (no change given!) or debit/credit cards. Birds seen at Lagoon Valley have included Western Bluebird, Cliff Swallow, Bullock's Oriole, and Western Kingbird. If the lake level is low, there's a good chance for Wilson's Snipe and Greater Yellowlegs. Bufflehead and American Wigeon are often among the waterbirds on the lake.

Trail Rating: 1 - Easy. Mostly level paths.

Leader: Mona Lange, 510-414-2959

Meet: Pena Adobe Park, off I-80 between Fairfield and Vacaville.

Directions: Take 680 to 80 East towards Sacramento. Take Exit 51B, Pena Adobe Road. DO NOT take the Lagoon Valley Road exit. After the stop sign, proceed straight veering to the LEFT onto Pena Adobe Road. Meet at the restroom building. Address is 4699 Pena Adobe Road, Vacaville, CA.

This field trip is limited to 12 participants. Participants must acknowledge the MDBA Liability Waiver (available during registration).

Register [HERE](#).

West Briones Regional Park

Thursday, May 9, 8AM - 1PM



Lazuli Bunting

Photo by Beth Branthaver

A visit to the west entrance of Briones Regional Park in the spring offers views of spring wildflowers and spring birds. Lazuli Buntings are often present, along with flycatchers, vireos, and many other species. Bring water and snacks. It might be warm by mid-day.

Rating: Category 2 - moderate hiking over dirt and gravel trails with mild slopes.

Elevation change: 200 feet

Leaders: Matt Tarlach & Cheryl Abel - MDBAFieldtrips@gmail.com

Meet: Bear Creek Staging Area parking lot

Directions: From SR 24 in Orinda, drive north on Camino Pablo about 2.25 miles, turn right on Bear Creek Road, continue for 4.5 miles to park entrance. Drive to farthest parking lot on the right.

This field trip is limited to 20 participants. Participants must acknowledge the MDBA Liability Waiver (available during registration).

Register [HERE](#).



pollinator & friends

SATURDAY, APRIL 6th
from 10am-4pm

Join us as we celebrate the beauty of birds, bees, bats and other creatures that play vital roles in our ecosystems.

This drop-in event features:

- Educational offerings from our partner organizations
- Unique craft and food vendors
- Various stations throughout the Plaza, Building and Garden including a children's craft table and a butterfly, bat and beehive observation table.

FREE CHILDREN ADMISSIONS.

Admission fee required for adults wishing to enter the Garden.

Learn more & RSVP here:



1552 Bancroft Rd. Walnut Creek, CA 94598



Earth Day Celebration

Free Garden Tour, Exhibits, Talks, Fun for Everyone!

Sunday, April 28, 2024—12:30-4:30 PM



Learn About, How to—

- . Provide for pollinators
- . Supply wildlife habitat
 - . Use Native Plants
- . Compost, Improve Soil
 - . Conserve water
- . Sustain your community
 - . Healthy gardening
 - . Garden Tour

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/earth-day-2024-free-fun-family-friendly-educational-tickets-833927518657?aff=oddtcreator>

Pleasant Hill Instructional Garden

Living Landscape: A California Habitats Garden

email: phigarden@gmail.com

P.O. Box 23454, Pleasant Hill, CA. 94523; Voicemail (925) 482-6670

At Pleasant Hill Education Center

1 Santa Barbara Road, Pleasant Hill

Across from Pleasant Hill Middle School



Donations are greatly appreciated—PHIG is a NonProfit 501(c)(3)organization

April Gallery & Media



Hummingbirds - Jewelled Messengers

See the full video [HERE](#)



With an Orange-Tufted Spiderhunter, Birder Breaks Record for Sightings

Read the article [HERE](#).

Photo: Noah Isakov/ [Macaulay Library ML 298895671](#)



Acorn Woodpecker/ Monterey, California, United States
Photo: [Brian Sullivan / Macaulay Library ML 27188071](#)



Violet-green Swallow/ Flathead, Montana, United States

Photo: **Joshua Covill / Macaulay Library ML 240900421**

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Mount Diablo Bird Alliance

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